



**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE (BHR)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

AFGHANISTAN – Complex Emergency

Information Bulletin #3, Fiscal Year (FY) 2001

July 9, 2001

Note: this Information Bulletin updates Information Bulletin #2, dated May 24, 2001.

Background

Two decades of war in Afghanistan, including a decade-long Soviet occupation and ensuing civil strife, have left Afghanistan impoverished and mired in an extended humanitarian crisis. Government infrastructure, including the ability to deliver the most basic health, education, and other social services, has completely collapsed. Most resources are directed to the war effort. Severe restrictions by the Taliban, including a restriction on women working outside the home, have added to the impact of poverty, particularly on the many households lacking able-bodied adult men. The Taliban now controls about 90 percent of Afghanistan's territory.

Two key factors have deepened Afghanistan's humanitarian crisis. The Taliban made substantial new territorial gains in August and September 2000, including the September 6 capture of Taloqan, which had been a Northern Alliance stronghold as well as the provincial capital of Takhar. Afghanistan has also suffered the effects of a debilitating drought that followed two successive years of inadequate rainfall. These developments have led to major new population displacements.

Numbers Affected

Afghanistan's total population is estimated at nearly 26 million. Since September 2000, civil strife and drought have driven an estimated 170,000 new refugees into Pakistan. Recent drought and conflict-displaced internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Afghanistan number between 600,000 and 800,000, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA). Longer-term conflict-displaced estimates of IDPs are as high as one million countrywide. Drought has affected at least 12 million Afghans. An estimated 2.6 million old caseload refugees remain outside Afghanistan's borders in Iran and Pakistan, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Current Situation

Drought and Food Security

A June 2001 joint Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)/ World Food Program (WFP) food assessment mission to 18 provinces warned that despite slightly improved rainfall levels, Afghanistan's food crisis has worsened since last year, with growing evidence of widespread famine conditions. FAO/WFP reported that rain-fed crops have almost completely failed, with the exception of a few pockets. Irrigated cereal also remains severely affected, although production in irrigated areas has improved somewhat since last year. The situation is exacerbated by extensive livestock losses. Further impacting food security is severe economic hardship including the lack of employment opportunities and the decline of cash crop production. The Taliban ban on poppy cultivation, which appears to have been effective, has severely impacted Afghans without income alternatives. According to FAO/WFP, economic problems are blocking or severely limiting the access of millions of people to commercially available food.

The western Afghan city of Herat has become a focal point for families in neighboring regions displaced by drought. The UN estimates that some 170,000 to 180,000 drought-displaced IDPs live in Herat, though other estimates vary widely. Most of the IDPs come from Badghis and Ghor Provinces. Efforts by relief agencies to provide assistance in areas of origin initially reduced the rate of influx to Herat, but the displaced population has continued to grow. Despite international assistance including airlifts of relief commodities by USAID/OFDA as well as the governments of Norway and Japan, the influx has continued to stretch available relief assistance. In particular, shelter and sanitation facilities are in short supply, according to UNOCHA. A recent WFP assessment mission to Badghis found that many of the remaining families had exhausted food supplies and livestock, and lacked sufficient assets to remain in their homes.

In northern Afghanistan, UNOCHA estimates that 14,000 displaced families have moved to the Mazar-e-Sharif area of Balkh Province over the past six months. The UN expects that further displacement is likely and anticipates additional IDP movement toward the urban areas of Mazar-e-Sharif and Pul-e-Kumri. Some 27 informal camps

have sprung up around Mazar-e-Sharif, and relief agencies active in the region have agreed to establish formal camps in response to the north's growing humanitarian needs.

Conflict

With the onset of spring, hostilities increased again, with fighting reported in Takhar, Bamiyan, as well as the western province of Farah. The Taliban reportedly captured Yakawlang District for the second time this year in June 2001. Following a brief capture of the district in January 2001, allegations of killings by the Taliban of more than 170 ethnic minority civilians surfaced. In April, opposition spokesmen described their intention to open multiple new fronts across the country in order to deflect Taliban attempts to mass forces against their northeastern stronghold.

Refugees

An estimated 70,000 refugees who arrived in Pakistan last fall remain gathered at a makeshift camp at Jalojai, near Peshawar. Another 50,000 refugees from last year's influx were moved by UNHCR to New Shamshatoo, also near Peshawar, to relieve crowding. The GOP had refused to let international organizations provide more than a minimum of assistance out of concerns of establishing a "magnet" for still more would-be refugees, resulting in abysmal conditions at Jalojai. In June, however, conditions improved somewhat, as NGOs were able to distribute thousands of tents, WFP was able to conduct its first full scale food distribution through local partner Shelter Now International (SNI), and UNHCR arranged for the doubling of daily potable water deliveries. Conditions at Jalojai remain the worst in Pakistan, however. The GOP set a June 30 deadline for the eviction of more than 100,000 old caseload Afghan refugees in the Nasir Bagh refugee camp in Peshawar, one of the oldest camps in Pakistan, to make room for a planned housing development. The deadline passed without any forcible returns, but some 200 Afghans left the camp on July 5 to return to Afghanistan under conditions that UNHCR confirmed were voluntary. Pakistani authorities have announced a three-month refugee status screening process for Nasir Bagh residents, effectively extending the deadline for closure of the camp.

U.S. Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART)

On June 17, USAID/OFDA deployed a five-person Afghanistan Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) to Pakistan, accompanied by USAID/OFDA's Disaster Response and Mitigation Division Director. The DART consists of officers from USAID/OFDA and Department of State's Bureau for Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM), working closely with a USAID Food for Peace (FFP) officer already in country. The DART will remain based in Islamabad with a field office in Peshawar until December 2001. The DART will coordinate with the Pakistan-based Afghanistan relief community, including USG partners, and may conduct assessments inside Afghanistan if possible.

U.S. Government Assistance FY 2001

On September 22, 2000, Assistant Secretary Karl F. Inderfurth re-declared a complex humanitarian disaster in Afghanistan for FY 2001. In addition, U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan William B. Milam issued a disaster declaration for Afghan refugees in Pakistan on February 2, 2001. To date, FY 2001 USG humanitarian assistance provided by USAID/OFDA, USAID/Food for Peace (FFP), the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), State/PRM, the joint Department of State/Department of Defense Demining Program, and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) totals \$117,869,525 including both assistance inside Afghanistan and to Afghan refugees in neighboring countries.

USAID/OFDA: To date, USAID/OFDA has provided over \$14.4 million of FY 2001 funds to assist drought and conflict-affected populations throughout Afghanistan. USAID/OFDA-funded programs include support for emergency health, nutrition, water/sanitation, food-for-work, shelter, non-food commodities, agriculture, air service, and coordination activities for IDPs, host families, surrounding communities, and populations at risk. NGO implementing partners are CARE, SNI, Action Contre la Faim (ACF), Mercy Corps International (MCI), Aiserv, International Medical Aid (IMA), Save the Children/US, and International Medical Corps (IMC). USAID/OFDA is further supporting UNICEF, UNFAO, UNOCHA, and UNCHS (Habitat). Earlier this year, USAID/OFDA airlifted emergency relief commodities for IDPs in Afghanistan and for Afghan refugees in Pakistan.

USAID/FFP: To date, USAID/FFP has provided \$22.5 million in FY 2001 for food assistance to meet the urgent needs of drought-affected Afghans. In support of WFP's Emergency Operation (EMOP), USAID/FFP contributed 30,000 MT of P.L. 480 Title II wheat valued at \$12.1 million, in addition to 6,310 MT of complementary commodities valued at \$4.8 million. Another 3,500 MT of wheat and 500 MT of vegetable oil valued at \$1.9 million went to support WFP's EMOP to feed newly arrived Afghan refugees in Pakistan. USAID/FFP also provided 17,280 MT of assorted food commodities valued at \$3.7 million in support of WFP's Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) for Afghanistan.

USDA: The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) provided 75,200 MT of 416 (b) wheat for WFP's EMOP, valued at \$32.8 million. In addition, USDA donated 65,000 MT of 416 (b) wheat valued at \$28.4 million for a current FY 2001 total of \$61.2 million in food assistance.

State/PRM: To date, State/PRM has provided \$16.4 million in FY 2001 to assist conflict and drought-affected populations in the region. State/PRM has given \$8.9 million to UNHCR and \$5.7 million to ICRC for activities in Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan. To support NGO projects in Afghanistan and Pakistan, State/PRM has provided \$1.8 million. These include projects that provide health care, water and sanitation, microcredit, capacity building, and education for refugees and returnees, in many cases with particular focus on the needs of women, children, and other vulnerable groups. State/PRM's NGO implementing partners include the International Rescue Committee, MCI, IMC, and Save the Children.

State/HDP: The U.S. Humanitarian Demining Program (HDP) provided \$2.8 million for demining activities in Afghanistan during FY 2001. Of this, \$1.1 million supports HALO Trust, a British demining organization, and \$1.7 million in financial and in-kind contributions supports the Mine Action Program for Afghanistan.

CDC: The Centers for Disease Control is providing \$569,525 to UNICEF to support polio eradication.

| | |
|-----------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| USAID/BHR/OFDA | \$14,400,000 |
| USAID/BHR/FFP | \$22,500,000 |
| USDA | \$61,200,000 |
| State/PRM..... | \$16,400,000 |
| State/HDP | \$2,800,000 |
| CDC | \$569,525 |
| Total USG Assistance FY 2001 (to date) | \$117,869,525 |

NOTE: USAID/OFDA bulletins can be obtained from the USAID web site at http://www.usaid.gov/hum_response/ofda/situation.html